



December 11, 2018

Carol L. Folt Ph.D., Chancellor
Haywood D. Cochrane, Chair, Board of Trustees
103 South Building, Campus Box 9100
UNC-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Dear Chancellor Folt, Chairman Smith and Chairman Cochrane:

We are writing to express our concern over the recent decision by UNC-CH's Board of Trustees to site a history center housing the Silent Sam statue on the Odum Village Campus. Kehillah Synagogue is prominently located at 1200 Mason Farm Road, just a short walk from the planned museum location. While we respect the challenges and complexity you face regarding the Silent Sam monument, we believe that placing it at Odum Village will pose a real and direct threat to the safety and security of our synagogue and our neighbors.

It is likely that this highly controversial monument will continue to function as a magnet for protests and counter-protests, with a potential for violence. Some participating individuals will undoubtedly have racist and anti-Semitic beliefs and purposes. Giving the statue a permanent home near our synagogue creates an immediate and lasting security threat for our congregation, staff members, building and property, as well as for the children who come to preschool here.

We are puzzled why we and our neighbors were not consulted regarding this matter. We know that the Community Church across the street, which is well known for its activity on behalf of social justice, immigrant rights, civil rights and LGBTQ+ rights, has also not been contacted. The ethnically and culturally diverse graduate students and their families living at nearby Baity Hill would also be at risk, and we wonder as well whether their input was solicited.

We ask that the Board take pause and arrange for a mutually respectful dialogue about this decision with the leadership of the Kehillah and with our neighbors – the leaders of the Community Church and representatives of the graduate students in married student housing, many of whose children are in our care.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Kotch, Co-President, Board of Directors
Andrew Werden, Co-President, Board of Directors
Mary Lawrence, CEO
Rabbi Jennifer Feldman

Cc:

Harry L. Smith, Jr., Chair, Board of Governors UNC System
UNC System Office